

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2011 AT
THE PARISH CENTRE LOCKLEYS DRIVE WELWYN
WHICH COMMENCED AT 7.45PM**

PRESENT: Councillor P Neville (Chairman) and Councillors M Benson, J Blackburn, M Castle, L McLusky, B Morris, I Skidmore and A Woolgar.

IN ATTENDANCE: A S Pack (Clerk to the Council)

APOLOGIES: Councillors C Hukin, J Khan and B McKay

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: One member of the public was in attendance

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all present and opened the meeting.

2011/159 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2011/160 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON THE 31st OCTOBER AND THE 9th NOVEMBER 2011.

RESOLVED "that the minutes of the Council meetings held on the 31st October and the 9th November 2011 be approved and signed".

Unanimously agreed.

**2011/161 MATTERS OF REPORT ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING.
PARISH CENTRE/WELWYN SCOUTS DRAINAGE WORK**

The Council have been advised that to complete the drainage work already undertaken the last section of the drain situated behind the buildings adjacent to Austin's Funeral Directors requires repairs. Two quotations have been received to complete this work, circulated as Appendix 8 with the Agenda papers for the meeting held on the 26th September 2011. 1st Welwyn Scouts have been informed that as this section of the drain is only used by the Scouts and the Council this is a joint responsibility.

The Welwyn Scout Group are to demolish their existing building and re-build a new Scout Headquarters and have requested this drainage work be put on hold until their building work commences.

DIGSWELL VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATION

The Digswell Village Green application has been accepted by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and has been placed in 1st position in their queue of outstanding applications. A copy of the letter was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 1.

2011/162 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Planning and Licensing: Councillor Skidmore, Vice Chairman of the Committee presented a report of the meetings held on the 25th October and the 15th November 2011 and answered questions. The Committee raised an objection to planning application Number N6/2011/2062 and N6/2011/2019/FP. Councillor Skidmore has

requested WHBC for permission to speak on these at the WHBC Planning meeting being held on Thursday 1st.

Car Park Leasing Committee. Councillor Skidmore, Vice Chairman of the Committee presented a report of the meetings held on the 21st November 2011 and answered questions. Councillor Skidmore advised once a mutual agreement had been reached about the Heads of Terms, then negotiations would begin.

Finance Committee. . Councillor Skidmore, Chairman of the Committee presented a report of the meetings held on the 21st November 2011 and answered questions.

2011/163 INVESTMENT STRATEGY

As a significant amount had been spent on capital projects this financial year, therefore in the interest of liquidity it was agreed no funds are to be invested, locked away, over a long period for the time being.

2011/164 DRAFT BUDGET FOR THE 2011.2012 FINANCIAL YEAR.

1. A Preamble to the Draft Budget was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 2 Councillor Skidmore advised unbudgeted expenditure had been incurred on some capital projects and advised more extensive scoping of projects would be undertaken prior to tendering future projects.

Councillor Skidmore advised no provision had been made in the proposed budget to provide skips on the allotment sites for the 2012/2013 financial year

As the provision of allotments is one of the only legislative duties of a parish Council, it was proposed by Councillor Benson, seconded by Councillor Woolgar "that the provisional budget be amended to include a 50% reduction in the provision of skips for the 2012/2013 year, with a sum of £ 750 being added to the provisional budget".

**Vote:2 for
4 against
The motion was not carried.**

2011/165 Draft Budget

The following financial papers were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 3

- Summary of Actual Accounts for 2011.2012
- Draft Budget Summary for 2012.2013
- Detailed Income and Expenditure to the end of October 2011.
- Detailed Draft budget by Income and Expenditure code for 2012-2013

Two draft budgets were presented for consideration.

Draft budget A

- included the management of the High Street, Lockley's Drive, Broomfield's and Titmus Yard Car Parks
- the funding to PCSO's for a further two year period was not included in this budget
- only 50% of the PWLB loan repayment had been included in the proposed draft budget
- The remaining 50% of the loan would be funded from the Capital Reserve.
- No other capital projects were included in draft budget A
- The provision of skips for allotment holders has been deleted from draft budget A making a saving of £ 1,500

Draft Budget A detailed in Appendix 3, would therefore show a Precept of £ 305,756 for the 2012/2013 financial year. This represents an increase in Precept of 3.7% when compared with the Precept for 2011/2012.

Draft budget B. This would be the same as the draft budget A but would include the following:

- 100% of the PWLB Loan repayments for the 2012/2013 year
- 50% funding towards a PCSO in 2012/2013. Annually this cost is £ 14,250. This would also be a commitment for the 2013.2014 year as this is a two year contract.

Draft budget B would therefore show a Precept of £ 332,521 for the 2012/2013 financial year. This is a 12.80% rise in the Precept when compared with the Precept for the 2011/2012 year.

At the Finance Committee meeting held on the 21st November it had been unanimously agreed to recommend Full Council either Budget A or Budget B.

Councillor Skidmore advised the provisional sum of £ 25,000 annual car park leasing costs had been included in both budget A and budget B.

The following items for capital expenditure had been identified however these would be funded from the capital reserve:

- Refurbish the Whitehill Car Park approximately £ 30,000
- Demolish the toilet block and install a staff parking area approximately £ 11,400

Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) were proposed as follows:

- Vehicle/ Machinery replacement £ 10,000
- IT replacement £ 1,000

Following discussion about PCSO provision, it was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Neville that the Council include the part funding of a PCSO in the 2012/2013 budget of £ 14,250”.

**Vote: 0 for
7 against
1 abstention.**

The motion was not carried.

Councillor Blackburn advised the Clerk had over the last two years started each budget heading with a zero budget to ensure the Council could justify every expenditure head. Enormous progress had also been achieved in bringing Council owned facilities up to an excellent standard.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Skidmore, seconded by Councillor Blackburn and

RESOLVED “that Budget A as detailed in Appendix 3 of the Agenda showing a Precept of **£ 305,756** for the 2012.2013 financial year, be agreed by Full Council” .

Unanimously agreed.

The Council gave a vote of thanks to the Clerk.

2011/166 TO CONSIDER HIRE CHARGES FOR COUNCIL OWNED FACILITIES, PLAYING FIELDS AND CHARGES FOR THE CEMETERY FOR THE YEAR 2012-2013

Proposed Charges for Council owned facilities in the 2012/2013 year attached as **APPENDIX 1**

At the Finance Committee meeting held on the 21st November 2011, it had been unanimously agreed to recommend Full Council approve these proposed charges, and to set up a Working Party to maximise usage of Council facilities.

It was proposed by Councillor Skidmore, seconded by Councillor Neville and

RESOLVED "that Full Council accept the charges for Council owned facilities in 2012/2013 as detailed in Appendix 1

Unanimously agreed.

It was proposed by Councillor Skidmore, seconded by Councillor Benson and

RESOLVED " that to maximize usage of Council facilities, a Working Party be set up to investigate the pattern of hiring and charges levied compared to similar facilities in the area, booking arrangements also to be investigated with a view to enabling use of internet facilities when inquiring about availability of premises. The Working Party to comprise members of the Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee, and the Finance Committee".

Unanimously agreed.

The following Councillors were elected to serve on the Working Party:
Councillors Blackburn, Castle, McLusky and Woolgar.

2011/167 COST ANALYSIS

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Skidmore, seconded by Councillor Castle and

RESOLVED "that a Working Party be set up to look in detail at all costs the Parish Council incur with a view to achieving best value for the community".

Unanimously agreed.

The following Councillors were elected to serve on the Working Party:
Councillors Benson, Castle, McKay, Morris, Skidmore and Woolgar.

2011/168 RECRUITMENT WORKING PARTY

The Chairman, Councillor Neville convened the Recruitment Working Party to look into the Clerk to the Council position and to make recommendations to the Council. The Recruitment Working Party meeting to be convened in the New Year.

The Recruitment Working Party comprises the following Councillors:
Councillors Neville, Benson, Blackburn, Castle, Hukin and Skidmore.

2011/169 COMMUNITY TOILET SCHEME

The Community Toilet Scheme agreement has been signed by the White Hart Hotel and signage to alert people to this scheme has been purchased. Permission to erect the signs on the Highway had not been obtained to date. However the Communities and Local Government web site identifies signs the same as the Council want to erect as good practice and similar signs are on display in Cheshire, Richmond and throughout the East Herts District. It was agreed a letter to be sent to the relevant cabinet minister requesting their help with this matter.

In the interim one sign has been erected adjacent to Lockleys Drive car park, a further two locations on private land are being investigated.

A further commercial property is interested in joining the Community Toilet Scheme and Councillor McKay to pursue this matter. It was agreed the scheme, as the first in the WHDC area should be advertised, possibly in the 'Life' magazine.

2011/170 STANDING ORDERS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

This item was deferred to the Full Council meeting scheduled to take place on January 30th 2012.

2011/171 ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD

A request was received from a church member to trim back the tree near the front porch of the church as it was obscuring the clock from all but a very limited angle. A member of the Parochial Church Council agreed that this work was required. As the tree is in a conservation area permission to undertake this work was sought from WHBC. Planning application in a conservation area number, N6/2011/1663/TC WHBC advised the tree had a TPO and therefore WHBC re-submitted the original application. Application number N6/2011/2316/TP.

WHBC have refused both applications; therefore no work will be undertaken to this tree.

2011/172 PAVILION REFURBISHMENT

Following investigation major work is required to the Pavilion drainage system. Three quotations had been received to complete the required work and were circulated with the Agenda of the meeting held on the 31st October 2011 Further clarification of the required work was requested Minute number 2011/145. Investigations have concluded that as the Parish Council own the land, they are responsible for repairs to the drains. Three quotations were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 5.

Investigation undertaken by Albion Building Contractors concluded that the lowest quotation from Shanahan Contractors Ltd of £ 8,300 covers all aspects of the work. The Council have used this contractor in the past and the work was satisfactory and was the lowest quotation received for this work also.

It was proposed by Councillor Neville, seconded by Councillor Morris and

RESOLVED "that Shanahan Contractors Ltd be employed to undertake the required drain work at a total cost of £ 8,300 plus VAT".

Unanimously agreed.

2011/173 PROPOSED PURCHASE OF A SALT SPREADER

Information received from National Association of Local Council (NALC) on the legal implications of Welwyn Parish Council purchasing a salt spreader for use by volunteer Councillors during icy weather, was circulated with the Agenda of the meeting held on the 31st October 2011. A document entitled 'Dealing with Winter Gritting and Snow Clearance Guidelines from Herts. County Council, to include an agreement to mobilise a workforce during inclement weather, was attached to the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 31st October 2011.

As Councillor McKay was preparing a paper on this topic but was absent this evening, this item was deferred to a future meeting of the Council.

2011/174

**CIVIC CENTRE
CEILING FANS**

One ceiling fan in the Civic Centre main hall is not working, inspection of all three ceiling fans confirmed that all three either require repair or replacement. The company who completed all the electrical work required during the refurbishment of the Civic Centre have provided two quotations, one to repair the three fans, one to replace the three fans. Quotation was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 8.

The extractor fans during heavy rain fall leaked causing pooling of water on the main hall floor. No damage occurred on this occasion. As there is some doubt as to whether the extractor fans are required following the refurbishment programme, further investigations to be undertaken.

REQUEST FOR A DISCOUNT ON HIRE FEES

Welwyn Wailers request a discount of 50% on fees for the use of the Civic Centre for the Welwyn Wailers Annual Music Hall in February 2012. Details circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 6.

It was agreed that the Council would not, as a rule, discount its hire fees but, in such circumstances, might make a grant under its policy on assistance to local voluntary activities.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Neville, seconded by Councillor Skidmore and

RESOLVED "that a grant of £ 500 be given to the Welwyn Wailers".

Unanimously agreed.

RENEWAL OF THE CIVIC CENTRE LEASE

A meeting was held with the Head of Corporate Property, WHBC to discuss the renewal of the existing Civic Centre lease which expires in June 2014 on the 10th October 2011. A copy of the Minutes of the meeting were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 7

WHBC would prefer the lease reviews are in line with RPI rather than CPI, as RPI is a nationally set figure. The Council do not agree with this and agreed that advice would be sought from NALC as to which method would be logical as far as rental of the Civic Centre is concerned, as the property does not have a mortgage.

The Finance Committee also recommend that the option of a further break point should be built into the lease agreement if WHBC's Special Expenses scheme terminates during the life of the lease. The Finance Committee therefore:

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND “that Full Council give permission for negotiations to proceed as detailed in the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th October 2011, with the option of a further break point built into the lease agreement if WHBC’s Special Expenses scheme terminates during the life of the lease. Clarification also from NALC whether reviews of the lease should be guided by RPI or CPI”.

Unanimously agreed by the Finance Committee

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Neville, seconded by Councillor Skidmore and

RESOLVED “that the Council await the response from NALC regarding whether CPI or RPI should guide future reviews, otherwise endorse the recommendations of the Finance Committee as detailed above”.

Unanimously agreed.

2011/175 BURNHAM GREEN- PROPOSED NEW LEASE TO DATCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL AND WELWYN PARISH COUNCIL

Hertfordshire County Council have agreed that subject to formalities a lease can be offered to both Datchworth and Welwyn Parish Council’s jointly. Proposed terms of a lease agreement were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 8.

This item was deferred to the Leisure Facilities and Open Spaces Committee.

2011/176 WELCOME SIGNS

Separate requests had been received, that Welwyn Parish Council considers installing a brickwork gateway for Welcome signs at Digswell and at Oaklands. Requests were circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 9. Due to budget constraints, it was agreed the Council are unable to consider funding either of these projects at this point in time.

2011/177 CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

The White Hart Hotel have requested the Christmas lighting be extended from Lloyds Chemist to their building and also along the front of their building, A quotation was circulated with the Agenda as Appendix 10.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor McLusky, seconded by Councillor Blackburn and

RESOLVED “that the Christmas lighting display be extended from Lloyds Chemist to the White Hart Hotel and along the frontage of the hotel for a total cost of £ 902”.

**Vote: 5 for
3 abstentions
The motion was carried**

2011/178 TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 1(2) OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA, ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT MAY INVOLVE THE LIKELY DISCLOSURE OF 7 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

EXEMPT BUSINESS

2011/179 MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING (EXEMPT BUSINESS) HELD ON THE 9th NOVEMBER 2011

RESOLVED "that the Minutes of the Full council Meeting (Exempt Business) held on the 9th November 2011 be approved and signed".

011/180 CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.20pm.

Signed.....Chairman, Welwyn Parish Council

19th December 2011